J. S. Mill and the motives behind free speech and censorship

"Glenn Greenwald: Big Tech is censoring Covid debate" interview by Freddie Sayers at Unherd.com

If people believe the truth simply because they are told it, they will believe a lie just as easily.
– Carneades.org

Sometimes – and some will argue – all of the time *– free speech results in harm.*

Tolerance for dissenting opinions is disappearing. Censorship is increasing. Regulating discourse is fast becoming the norm. You have your set of beliefs and they have theirs and if you've got more power than they do, theirs will not be heard... It's that simple.

It seems not too long ago that there were trusted institutions that could be called upon to help us sort "fake news" and conspiracy theories from unconventional but genuine challenges to received thinking. But these institutional authorities—academics, principled news outlets, even the occasional government agency—have lost the trust of the average thinking person. It seems

we need a heavier hand. Untrammeled speech is a luxury we cannot afford in Trumpian or post-Trumpian times.

After all, Biden *barely* won, just like Clinton *barely* lost four years earlier. Why? The "barely," I mean?... That must have rancored and frightened many. And what is the "woke" response to this fright? It seems to be to suppress anyone who doesn't toe a certain centrist line. But is this how it is supposed to work? Classical liberals, traditional harborers of tolerance, can no longer bring themselves to tolerate those so rude as to actually practice free speech. John Stuart Mill was naive to think that we needn't fear false and pernicious speech because the general practice of the liberty to criticize would unveil such for what it was: ignorance or stupidity. Let everybody talk, he thought, the truth will out itself organically... So quaint, Mill.

The thinking seems to go something like: when idiots threaten to take charge and demolish our "liberal" institutions, we are obliged to reign in liberality for the good of these institutions. Solidarity must "trump" liberality in these panicky times.

People cannot be trusted to think for themselves anymore. Could they ever? Or was that just an illusion? Trust quit the scene. What happened? Assuming it was ever there, and that it is desirable, what is it going to take to get it back?

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The controversies above are adduced by way of showing how relevant the arguments below are. A century and a half ago, J. S. Mill offered one of the clearest defenses of the value of, and limitations on, free speech. We will take a close look at Mill's argument for free expression and its qualification since, to assess whether censorship is ever justified, it is important to determine what value free speech has independent of other values.

Does Mill's argument still hold up? Or not?

J. S. Mill on free speech

The value of free speech

A consequentialist, Mill thought free expression defensible on (more specifically) utilitarian grounds. He thought that from free expression the best consequences overall ensue regardless of which of the four possible epistemic values it may have, that is, whether it is:

1. true
2. false
3. partly true and partly false
4. incomprehensible or incoherent

Since these together exhaust the possible epistemic range of an expression, *all expression*, as such, should be unconstrained. To think this implies each of those epistemic values has utility.

One may think that an expression has value *only* if it's true – or that speech that is false, confused, or nonsense has little or no value. Not so for Mill. In fact, the informational value of *true* speech may be the icing on the cake, but not the cake itself. The *enduring* value lies elsewhere.

Ethically, Mill was a consequentialist; epistemically, he was an empiricist. An empiricist claims our *only* access to truth is through observation. We do not have direct or intuitive access to truth. We must infer what of it we have from what we learn via observation, either our own or that of others whose *expressed* testimony is also an "observation," one that we may be privy *and* privileged to. Albeit, theirs is a second-hand one. But this is it, we have no other access. Mill takes it for granted that neither our first-hand, nor second-hand via others, access to truth is infallible. What we observe – or trust others to have observed – to be "true" is never immune to correction. With these assumptions, consider an instance of speech or expression:

1. Suppose it is true. We conclude an expression to be true based on our observation and/or the trusted testimony of others. Are we justified in stopping there and never entertaining a counter-expression, one that contradicts or raises questions concerning the conviction that we possess the truth value of the expression? No, says, Mill. Even if our belief that something is true really does correspond to an actual truth in the world apart from our belief, the mental exercise of reminding ourselves of *why* we believe what we believe and why anything that runs counter to it is not true helps to shore up the certainty of our conviction as well as sharpen our critical thinking skills. It is not enough to believe the truth. I must know how to defend it to myself and to others. And this requires frequent opportunities to exercise the relevant skills. It is not optional but a necessary part of epistemic hygiene that we air out reasons to believe whatever we believe. *So something's being true is no reason to stifle skepticism about it*. Rather, it is an invitation to a healthy mental exercise.

2. Suppose it is false. Just take what is said in the first supposition above and replace "true" with "false," and you get the same argument. Briefly, if something is false, the exercise of being able to articulate *why* is a reason not to suppress even a false statement (again, on the assumption it *is* false). It is not merely that the apparently false statement *might* be true – and it *might* given our fallibility – but even if it *really* is false, the rehearsal of spelling out to ourselves and to others exactly why it is false is epistemically salutary.

3. Suppose it is a bit of both. This case may be the most common. On the assumption that we are fallible in even our considered judgments, the likelihood that we may have *some*, but not all, of the picture correct, it seems safe to assume, is high. Consider the history of science – the most methodologically rigorous method of gaining "knowledge" we have. A sober assessment of that history is that science could be defined as the process of "knowledge *obsolescence.*" Proper scientific practice is *always* in the business of correcting itself. But in what sense is knowledge "knowledge" if it will cease to be that tomorrow? A possible response to this skepticism may concede that we may not have it *all* correct, but surely *some* of our knowledge inventory is true,

and the speech in question may contradict *that*, and, if so, then we may dismiss it forthwith... But we refer again to the first case above concerning even just this "certain" part of our knowledge inventory. Moreover, even if we could not be wrong about certain things, there would remain the epistemic task of sorting the "true" bits from the "suspicious" bits. Again, *it is this exercise that is perennially valuable*, not the conclusion we come to – since that remains open to revision (on the fallibility assumption built-in to empiricism), and this is so *perennially.*

4. **Finally, suppose the expression is beyond deciphering.**[1] Suppose the President of the United States tweets, "Despite the constant negative press covfefe…" Whatever follows this clause, is it true, false, a bit of both, or what? Should this kind of talk be suppressed?... As a matter of fact, in the wake of this tweet, there was much head scratching, including serious attempts at imaginative repair. One semantic fix suggested that the President meant to say "coverage." But the President never acknowledged the correctness of that repair. There were speculations that it had something to do with "coffee" or "covid"[2] – or some postmodern amalgam of the two. For a moment, the earth stood still, and focused on the word, "covfefe." Some thought it amusing, others didn't. A congressperson proposed a law calling for the National Archives to preserve such expressions. The state of Georgia classed it with obscenities that you aren't permitted to obtain vanity license plates with… So *somebody* took the trouble to attribute sense to the word. *The mere fact the word garnered the attention it did* was sufficient cause to make it an occasion for the Millian mental exercise... Poetic imagination plays no small part in the generation of new insights. Even the unintelligible should give us pause for thought. It says something about us that we *will* attribute meaning to nonsense.

...

To sum up Mill's case for free speech: it is epistemic. It is about the opportunities for exercise of our ability to critically evaluate *any* expression: true, false, both, or neither. The practice of this skill is essential for increased understanding.

The limit of free speech

So much for its utility, *but can't speech harm?* We don't just value understanding, we also must tolerate each other's speech behavior well enough to live with each other.

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1. Mill himself did not much consider this fourth epistemic status. In the interest of completeness, I thought it necessary to cover all these bases and offer a Millian take on nonsense speech, consistent with his core thesis that occasions for critical evaluation are fundamentally valuable quite apart from any conclusions derived.
2. Notwithstanding that the "covfefe" tweet dates from 2017, three years prior to the pandemic... Was the President in on something happening in Wuhan, at least partly funded by the U.S. even then (knowledge of which he was plausibly privy to), and involving none other than early "gain-of-function" research advocate, Dr. Anthony Fauci? Was it a Freudian slip on Trump's part? Something he was not supposed to reveal, catching himself just in time? Consider this in light of his subsequent and frequent vituperative repetition of "C-h-i-n-a" in his speeches and the clear tension between him and Fauci... Maybe my imagination is a little overheated, but crazy as it sounds, there is increasing evidence the U.S. was involved in such dangerous research in Wuhan long before the outbreak of Covid-19. Wouldn't it make for an arresting plot twist if it turns out that Fauci, our "covid savior," was at least partially responsible for the pandemic in the first place? (None of this is to show that Trump's insinuations had anyone's interest but his own in mind. Only that he was, *and is*, hardly alone. Fauci's recent tergiversations do not inspire confidence.)

Mill offered one famous caveat to untrammeled speech, *only* one. Is is known as "the harm principle" and explains the only condition under which expression may be justifiably constrained. It applies to speech that leads *beyond* mere expression. Speech that merely invites consideration, that causes you to give it consideration, is justified on the grounds that it offers those in attendance exercise in critical evaluation – *never* a bad thing regardless of the epistemic value of the speech. The speech going beyond mere expression Mill has in mind is speech that leads to *immediate action.* This kind of speech does not have the blanket dispensation that other speech has. Such speech may run afoul of consequentialist ethical principles both because of its *immediacy* and because what it enjoins is less consideration than *action*.

His concern here is that speech that leads to *immediate* action may cause *physical* harm. And physical harm is neither epistemically useful, nor without qualification ethical.

The potential immediacy of what some speech advocates robs it of the epistemic dispensation that is conferred when the speech leads to *time-consuming* consideration, to the epistemic exercise of critical evaluation. The occasion for such mental exercise confers epistemic value on *any* speech. It is a saving grace that even idiotic speech possesses simply in virtue of the fact that it calls upon you to pass *considered* judgment on it in order to assess its idiocy. This exercise, again, is *never* a bad thing. It is never a bad thing because speech requiring critical evaluation will never vanish from social discourse, hence, training in its assessment will never loose great utility.

Speech, on the other hand, that promotes *immediate* action short circuits the time-consuming act of critical evaluation. For this reason, it cannot be given an automatic pass which other speech may enjoy.

"The [physical] harm principle"

Mill wants to construe *action* as physical, not as mental or psychological. *Physical* harm is a primary concern of a utilitarian ethical theory, such as Mill's, which confers moral status only on sentient beings.[3]

Compare:

3. The SEP entry on Mill's moral and political philosophy glosses Mill's distinction between "harms" and "offenses" this way: "Not every unwelcome consequence for others counts as a harm. Offenses tend to be comparatively minor and ephemeral…" Why do I interpret Mill's harm of significance as *physical*? To attempt to keep it coherent. It seems clear Mill wants to draw the line somewhere on what kinds of harm are significant enough to override the value of free speech. Being a utilitarian, his fundamental hedonism, which implies a sentientism, either blocks expansion to intangible and abstract harms (the kind not leaving bruises or leaking blood, i.e., emotional trauma, damage to my culturally inflected self-esteem, etc.) or it slides down the slippery slope of harm expansion to the point of obviating any guidance the notion of harm is adduced to offer. Mill, perhaps mistakenly, thought these non-physical harms "comparatively minor and ephemeral" – as though physical harms could not *also* be "comparatively minor and ephemeral." If *any* class of harm may be "comparatively minor and ephemeral," of what utility is the "harm" principle? Rather, it seems, he should have offered clearer demarcation. I suspect Mill was banking on the clarity of *physical* damage. (Granted, Mill's sentientism was not as hard-core as Bentham's. Mill, after all, distinguished "higher" and "lower" pleasures – but that just shows Mill to be less coherent or more muddled than Bentham: Mill was surreptitiously importing *extra-utilitarian* intuitions into his moral philosophy.)

- Supposing on Youtube, I advocate the violent overthrow of the government.
- President Trump egging on an agitated crowd to storm the capitol building on January 6th.

Both are calls to action, but there are structural obstacles to the immediacy of possible effect in my case that are not present in the Trump case. Who would listen to me? Who the hell am I? I am on Youtube, one among an uncountable number of two-bit idiots there. Trump, on the other hand, was in a position of authority in front of a large, angry, loyal crowd in close proximity to the Capitol. But our idiocy (if it is that) is irrelevant. The difference in likelihood of violent effect in these cases *is* relevant to consequentialist considerations. It seems, a Millian defense for my speech could be made, less so in the case of Trump. The likelihood of immediate, unconsidered physical harm resulting from my instigation is small enough to permit the consequential good in the epistemic opportunity it offers those in attendance to improve their critical thinking skills. Less so in the Trump case. The causal chain between Trump's speech acts and possible physical harm, relative to that in my case, is too short. (The U.S. Supreme Court, for example, has enshrined Mill's thinking here in the legal doctrine establishing the "fighting words" exception to free speech.)

The conceptual expansion of "harm"

But there is a problem with the narrow scope of Mill's notion of harm. In the over century and a half since its articulation, the principle's restriction to *physical* harm has not aged well. This is owing to the "expansion of harm" problem. We may ask what other kinds of relevant harm might there be? What about mental, emotional, spiritual, psychological, social, and even *meta*physical harm? Why don't these count as important in Mill's harm principle?

Mill had good reason to confine the harm relevant to free speech restriction to the physical form. If you say something that disturbs my peace of mind, why can't I complain that you have harmed me and that therefore your speech should be suppressed? Mill saw an unstoppable slippery slope in allowing harm *beyond the physical* to count against free speech. Letting an offended party, witness to an act of free speech, be the judge of what is and is not harm would allow the harm principle to justify the suppression of *any* speech.

If we expand "the harm" referred to in "the harm principle" to include mental pain and suffering, damage to my self-esteem, or subversion of my belief system – or even that of the cohort to which I belong, however large or small, then no speech that isn't affirming and polite will be tolerated. That may make for comfort, but, for Mill, it spells epistemic disaster. For then, even attempts at truth are banished.

In Mill's time, one might have gotten away with such a simplistic understanding of what constitutes harm. Not anymore. For better or worse, the speed with which the concept is enlarging is accelerating. The slippery slope Mill feared is upon us

Metaphysical harm

We will skip a discussion of how important emotional, psychological, or social harms have become, as these are more familiar, widely accepted as legitimate forms of harm – if still controversial at the margins. The law around them is settling. Instead, we will focus on the cutting edge of the expansion problem: *meta*physical harm. *If a case can be made for the possibility that metaphysical harm is real, then the legitimacy of these other relatively more modest forms of claimed harm follows easily.*

A metaphysics is a system of beliefs that undergird all your other beliefs and acts, to the extent your acts follow from your beliefs. Your metaphysics is your set of *fundamental* beliefs. For example, do you believe you have a perduring self (soul, mind, spirit…), a non-physical, non-material reality or construct that is the seat of all that is important to you? It would be the thing that you take to be significant about you, that you might identify with, that you might say is the thing that stays the same about you from one day to the next, the thing that gets credit today for what it did yesterday or held responsible for what it does tomorrow, the thing that was there in some degree when you were born and will be there on your last day of consciousness…

Or do you belief you are a set of subatomic particles behaving in accordance with impersonal, utterly indifferent, laws of nature – and that is *all* you are. The sum total what you are is ultimately explainable in such terms. All else about you or your experience that isn't material is epiphenomenal. As some metaphysicians put it, all this epiphenomenal stuff is to what you really are like the exhaust that leaves its tailpipe is to an internal combustion vehicle. It is in no essential way fundamental to the identity or function of the vehicle. We might easily conceive a powered vehicle with no exhaust (e.g., an electric one).

Now suppose you have a metaphysics. Most people do whether they realize it or not. Whether atheist or believer, for example, you have a metaphysics (specifically, an ontology about what there is or is not in the universe). And your metaphysics is important to you; it helps organize and structure your life choices. It is the framework within which you will think and operate in the world. As such, it has value to you.

What happens when your metaphysical framework is damaged or destroyed through the intentional or negligent speech acts of others? Are you harmed?

1. "Mindfulness" therapeutics

Suppose you seek help for a psychological condition. Say, you seek psychotherapy for depression or anxiety. You have tried various pharmacological and cognitive behavioral therapies, not requiring any particular set of beliefs on your part to be helpful. Their effectiveness is agnostic as to your belief system. They operate at the level of biochemistry or subconscious processes... And they have *not* worked for you.

Further, suppose you, as most people, have a sense of a "self" that grounds whom you take yourself to be. A medical professional, a psychotherapist refers you to mindfulness training as a

possible treatment.[4] The professional *neglects* to inform you that, for such treatment to work, the ontology of your metaphysics must undergo a radical revision. You must forfeit the notion of a perduring "self." You must come to see yourself as continuous with your phenomenal environment.[5] You undergo the recommended training. In the process, you realize you find the transformation of your metaphysics disturbing and disorienting. Perhaps it was your fault that you did not take seriously the denial of "self" (or its radical reconceptualization) entailed by the training. Perhaps you were thinking this "self"-lessness was metaphorical. In any case, you were not clearly informed that this "self"-lessness was no joke. For the therapy to work, you must take it dead seriously. And this is more than you bargained for. It leads to a worsening of your condition. Later, you discover that a transformation of metaphysical beliefs was known to be entailed by, and an essential part of, the treatment.

You feel that you have been in some way harmed: what comfort or grounding your prior metaphysics offered as a framework for your values has now been taken from you, and no new, as convincing, and more satisfactory one has replaced it.

Is this a basis for saying you have been ethically – or even legally – *harmed?* Do you have a basis for a medical malpractice lawsuit?

Are medical professionals who are not careful in their recommendation of such metaphysically-loaded *therapies to specify that the therapies may have deleterious side effects morally and legally liable in the same way those are who neglect to obtain* informed *consent in cases of pharmacological or physical interventions?*

This is a question that is being debated at the forefront of medical ethics.[6]

Suppose someone responds that belief systems are just words… "Sticks and stones may break my bones but words will never hurt." How could altering your belief system possibly hurt?

2. The depressed atheist

Suppose you are an atheist suffering from serious depression that has shown itself to be, in your experience, resistant to conventional therapies. In desperation, you turn to a devout Catholic friend who suggests that you see a priest who practices exorcism. "The possibility you may be

4. "Mindfulness holds promise for treating depression: New research suggests that practicing mindfulness may help prevent a relapse," Stacy Lu. *American Psychological Association Monitor*, (March 2015), Vol 46, No. 3.
5. This is not just an idea borrowed from Tibetan philosophy, David Hume held a similar view. (Though there is suspicion that his source can be traced back to the first Buddhist ideas imported to Europe early in the 18th Century.)
6. "Forgetting ourselves: epistemic costs and ethical concerns in mindfulness exercises," Sahanika Ratnayake and David Merry. *Journal of Medical Ethics*, (2018) Vol 44, Issue 8: 567–574. Abstract: "Mindfulness exercises are presented as being compatible with almost any spiritual, religious or philosophical beliefs. In this paper, we argue that they in fact involve imagining and conceptualising rather striking and controversial claims about the self, and the self's relationship to thoughts and feelings. For this reason, practising mindfulness exercises is likely to be in tension with many people's core beliefs and values, a tension that should be treated as a downside of therapeutic interventions involving mindfulness exercises, not unlike a side effect. Clients ought to be informed of these metaphysical aspects of the exercises, and mental health providers ought to take them into account in assessing which course of treatment to recommend. Given these concerns, the casual way in which mindfulness exercises are presently distributed by mental health providers to the general public is inappropriate."

possessed by a demon cannot be ruled out," your well-meaning friend informs you. You see a priest in the mistaken and *uncorrected* assumption that you do not have to believe in demons for exorcism to work. Nevertheless, you make a good faith effort to *try* to believe in the full set of ontological beliefs that attend being a devout Catholic[7] – God, Satan, hell, demons, the power of ritual and prayer, etc. But the belief-conversion doesn't take. All that the exorcist rituals and the doxastic preparation required for their efficacy has managed to accomplish is that now your prior certainties concerning God's non-existence, etc. have been shaken, but not fully replaced. You are in a doxastic limbo, a purgatory, if you will. You are now, *in addition to being depressed and near suicide, without even the prior atheist's consolation that at least death would end your misery.* Now, post botched-conversion-attempt to a different system of beliefs, life remains hell for you *and* you half-fear that an eternity in hell awaits you if you end it! *How is that for metaphysical harm?!*

Is your friend's advice morally censurable on the grounds that this possible side-effect of following it was not made clear to you?

3. Cisnormativity and homophobia

Suppose you have homosexual or transsexual impulses in a society that deems having such impulses symptoms of mental disorder. You are confirmed in your gender identity or your sexual orientation, but your social environment is hostile to your convictions regarding these aspects of your self-conception. You are pressured to seek some kind of treatment to alter your self-conception. One's self-conception is a critical piece of one's metaphysics. You are being pressured to change it. This pressure can involve at least social if not also political and economic up to and including legal penalties for resisting it, depending on social context. The expressed values that are part of the "re-programming" designed to make you "fit in" can lead to violence to your metaphysics. Hence, you can be metaphysically harmed by pressure to conform. Should speech, for instance, that expresses cisnormativity and homophobic values be suppressed because of the harm it does to the core of your system of beliefs about yourself? Even if it is only "in the air" and not explicitly coercive?

4. Rights violation

More generally and perhaps more obviously, every violation or infringement of any "right" you have is a "metaphysical harm." This is not something that early utilitarians like Jeremy Bentham (certainly) and Mill (likely) would have accepted, however. Bentham took a dim view of the very notion of a "right." He famously dubbed it "nonsense on stilts." "Rights," as such, play no critical part in ethical consequentialist metaphysics. They are not empirically accessible; no chemist or particle physicist can inform you of their fundamental constituents. Rights cast no shadows and have no flavor. They are quite literally the "brain-children" of a group of philosophers whose metaphysics Bentham and Mill, among others, did not share. Philosophers like Locke, Rousseau, Kant, and many others since have developed elaborate systems around "rights" and gotten them inserted into constitutions and legal theory. There are rights today for

7. We might have stuck with Tibetan Buddhism just as well. See Yaktovil.

this, that, and the other that would have boggled the minds of Bentham and Mill.[8] Their proliferation has been steady, and along with it, also what counts as a violation of a right. Such a violation is called a "wrong." Although a "wrong" is not exactly the same as a "harm," it is an easy distinction to gloss over.

Here is a commonly used illustration of the difference between "being harmed" and "being wronged": You are using a public dressing room in a department store. A "peeping Tom" has set up a hidden camera to view and record people like you in various states of undress. Neither you nor anyone else ever learns of this – except, of course, the "peeping Tom." Have you been *harmed* by what he did?

It is difficult to say in what possible sense you were harmed if only he ever knows about this. Certainly, there can be no question of physical, mental, emotional, psychological, social, or economic harm done. But we want to say, nevertheless, something untoward and damaging to you occurred. What could that injured thing possibly be if not your *right* to expect privacy in the situation described?

But what is this thing called a "right"? It is an abstract thing cooked up by the culture we live in to express a value. It is a normative cultural artifact, a part of the universe of ideas that frame how we structure our reality that is not physical or material. It is *metaphysical*.[9] And this metaphysical thing you supposedly possess can suffer damage and when that happens we say you have been "wronged." It is a negatively-valenced thing just like the physical harm that Mill's more stingy metaphysics wanted to use restrict speech behavior.

A limit to expansion?

Rights are metaphysical entities and they are proliferating. Since Mill's time (and forgetting him) we have come to see rights-violation as a serious harm. The range of possible harms is expanding.

Is there a natural limit to the expansion of harm or the wrong of rights-violation?

If not, free expression, it seems, is in trouble.

Resources

1. John Stuart Mill offered the classic defense of free speech in Chapter 2 "Of the Liberty of Thought and Discussion" of his book *On Liberty* (1859) (pdf / audiobook).

8. At most, a utilitarian may conceive of a "right" as an instrument for purveying utility. To say you have a "right to vote," just means that society is best governed when those like you are permitted a voice. *That's all it means.* It doesn't mean that there is anything special about you that entitles you, specifically, to this privilege. It is not even a "privilege;" it's a technique to accomplish some greater aggregate good.
9. A bit of *parochial,* perhaps, metaphysics, but metaphysics just the same.

2. Carneades.com's excellent quick exposition of Mill's case for free speech and the "harm principle," which Mill understood to be the only defensible limit on free speech.

3. John Danaher's "Mill's Argument for Free Speech: A Guide."

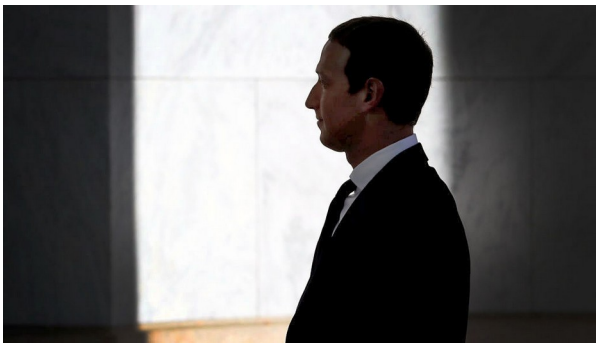
4. "Glenn Greenwald: Big Tech is censoring Covid debate" video interview by Freddie Sayers at *Unherd.com.*

5. Curtailment of free expression and surveillance culture are tightly connected. The latter facilitates the former; the former is motive for the latter. Why would it even occur to anyone that your government, your employer, or even *you* may have ulterior motives and, hence, be lacking in trustworthiness?

Consider Russell Brand's commentary.

Such motives may be inescapable, but the least we can do is make them explicit. And this requires bending over backwards to keep information – idiotic and authoritative, alike – unfettered, since what is "idiotic" and what "authoritative" (sadly for the unsophisticated) are perennially in play. It shows a keen lack of respect for the critical acumen of the individual to suppose otherwise than that they must be held responsible for how they process information. The lack of respect is the link between the superficial *political* and the deeper *ethical* concerns around free expression.

6. Instagram bans Robert Kennedy Jr. over Covid & vaccine posts as his group sues Facebook. "Instagram [owned by Facebook] recently banned Bobby Kennedy Jr's account. 'We removed this account for repeatedly sharing debunked claims about the coronavirus or vaccines,' Facebook, which owns Instagram, said in a statement. According to Mary Holland, President of Children's Health Defense which was founded by RFK Jr, the accusations are false and defamatory. She discusses why they're suing Facebook and why she says the media mischaracterizes RFK and his work."



7. "Facebook's incompetent censorship: Its hypocritical attempts to clamp down on 'misinformation' are ultimately self-defeating," by Douglas Murray, *Unherd.com*.

8. Odysee Exclusive - "Immune System & Vaccines Part 2," Dr. Sam Bailey, April 6th, 2021. Apparently, YouTube is now an arbiter of what is good medical advice and what is not. Hence, this video is not hosted there. Bailey, who is part of an international team of experts in infectious diseases and biomedical research, has been deemed medically subversive, for suggesting that the

science for the standard response to pathogenic diseases is informed by too little basic research unmotivated by perverse economic incentives. Covid is only implicated in her aspersions. It is barely addressed, but it is too dangerous to suggest such things.

9. On Youtube censorship, Alison Morrow interviews Jordan Chariton "YouTube 'trying to push us off' says progressive news channel || Jordan Chariton."

10. On the suppression of rational, competent, and plausibly well-motivated (in the sense that no obvious "perverse incentives" are involved) dissenting views in science,… or Facebook and Youtube now do science: a.) "DarkHorse Podcast with Geert Vanden Bossche & Bret Weinstein." b.) "Facebook 'warns' us against Geert Vanden Bossch podcast," c.) "Joe Rogan, Fauci, and vaccine science."

11. "Amsterdam's Slow Descent into Madness - The New Abnormal," What happens when patience with a lockdown is exhausted? "In recent weeks, protests have snowballed with pandemic demonstrations mounted in Austria, Britain, Finland, Romania, Switzerland, Poland, France, Bulgaria, Serbia, the Netherlands and Romania." – from Voice of America (VOA), a venerable institution dedicated to advocating *freedom* internationally (except when it conflicts with, as its name openly suggests, "American" values).

12. "How science has been corrupted: The pandemic has revealed a darkly authoritarian side to expertise," Matthew B Crawford. Crawford has degrees in physics and political philosophy. He is a senior fellow at the University of Virginia's Institute for Advanced Studies in Culture. Increasingly, science is pressed into duty as authority.

13. "Jeffrey Howard & Dangerous Speech," *The Philosopher and the News* podcast on the banning of Trump from Twitter and related issues.

"United Corporations of America" (adbusters.org)

Appendix: expansion of harm notes

"Snapchat Can Be Sued Over Role In Fatal Car Crash, Court Rules," *NPR*, May 4, 20217:51 PM ET